

C. Sullivan, president, Building and Construction Trade Department.

Telephone Remarks to Participants in the March for Life *January 22, 2002*

Nellie, thank you very much. I want to thank you very much, and I want to wish everybody a good afternoon. I'm calling from the State of West Virginia.

I want to begin, Nellie, by praising you and your dedication to the cause of human life. For almost 30 years, Americans from every State in the Union have gathered on the Washington Mall in order to march for life. This march is an example of an inspiring commitment and of deep human compassion.

Everyone there believes, as I do, that every life is valuable, that our society has a responsibility to defend the vulnerable and weak, the imperfect, and even the unwanted, and that our Nation should set a great goal that unborn children should be welcomed in life and protected in law.

Abortion is an issue that deeply divides our country, and we need to treat those with whom we disagree with respect and civility. We must overcome bitterness and rancor where we find it and seek common ground where we can. But we will continue to speak out on behalf of the most vulnerable members of our society.

We do so because we believe the promises of the Declaration of Independence are the common code of American life. They should apply to everyone, not just the healthy or the strong or the powerful. A generous society values all human life. A merciful society seeks to expand legal protection to every life, including early life, and a compassionate society will defend a simple, moral proposition: Life should

never be used as a tool or a means to an end.

These are bedrock principles, and that is why my administration opposes partial-birth abortion and public funding for abortion, why we support teen abstinence and crisis pregnancy programs, adoption and parental notification laws, and why we are against all forms of human cloning.

And that is why I urge the United States Senate to support a comprehensive and effective ban on human cloning, a ban that was passed by an overwhelming and bipartisan vote of the House of Representatives last July.

We are a society with enough compassion and wealth and love to care for both mothers and their children and to seek the promise and potential of every single life. You're working and marching on behalf of a noble cause and affirming a culture of life. Thank you for your persistence, for defending human dignity, and for caring for every member of the human family.

May God continue to bless America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:08 p.m. from Charleston, WV, to march participants on the National Mall in Washington, DC. In his remarks, he referred to Nellie J. Gray, president, March for Life Education and Defense Fund. The related proclamation of January 18 on National Sanctity of Human Life Day is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Exchange With Reporters in Belle, West Virginia January 22, 2002

Upcoming Session of Congress/Terrorist Attack in India

Q. Mr. President, do you think the Enron investigation will become a distraction for Congress and, by extension, your goals?

The President. No.

Q. Is the attack in Calcutta an attack on America? Was the attack in Calcutta an attack on our country?

The President. Well, we're gathering more information about it, to find out exactly what the facts are. Terror is terror, however. It doesn't matter whether it's an attack on us or an attack on other people. You've got to work together to fight off terrorists.

For your question, I believe Congress knows what it needs to do. It needs to fund the war. It needs to fund homeland security. It needs to work on ways to create jobs. And I'm confident that all the facts will come out on Enron. And I'm also confident that if Congress has the right attitude, we can get a lot done. We need an energy policy, a trade policy. So I'm going to keep talking about it until we get it done.

Enron/Energy Policy

Q. Do you worry that Enron creates a negative perception about you or your policies?

The President. Our administration has done the exact right thing. There has been a couple of contacts with people in my Cabinet. And my Cabinet officers said, "No help here." And we're starting an investigation before anybody started paying attention to Enron. Last December, Elaine Chao started an investigation of pensions. And I'm absolutely confident the American people know that my administration has acted the right way.

What I'm outraged about is that shareholders and employees didn't know all the facts about Enron. My own mother-in-law bought stock last summer, and it's not worth anything now. If she had known all the facts, I don't know what her decision would have been made, but she didn't know all the facts. And a lot of shareholders didn't know all the facts. And that's wrong.

And so our Government must do something about it, must make sure that the accounting practices that have been going on for quite a while are addressed, make sure there's full disclosure and the corporate government's issues are wide open for everybody to understand.

If Congress is going to do its business, and should—the Congress also needs to stay focused on the American people. We're running a war. We've got to make sure our homeland is secure. And we've got to make sure people can find work. And we'll take care of our business.

Q. [*Inaudible*—call the information about meetings between the Vice President and Enron and energy policy, just to get it out—

The President. If somebody has got an accusation about some wrongdoing, just let me know. It's like when I talked with Don Evans and O'Neill, they told me they had spoke to Enron. I said, "Tell the people what you did." And if there's any accusations, if you've got anything on your mind—the energy report should speak for itself. We laid out the energy report; it's fully disclosed. People now know that we need an energy plan based upon conservation and increasing supplies and better transmission of energy. And there's no better place to talk about energy than right here in West Virginia, which is an energy-dependent State.

Q. The West Virginia coal miners, sir, what do you say to—